



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Commissioner for Patents
United States Patent and Trademark Office
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

GOOGLE / FENWICK
SILICON VALLEY CENTER
801 CALIFORNIA ST.
MOUNTAIN VIEW CA 94041

COPY MAILED

JUN 29 2009

OFFICE OF PETITIONS

In re Patent No. 7,499,958	:	
MIHAI FLORIN IONESCU	:	DECISION ON
Issue Date: March 3, 2009	:	REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION
Application No. 10/813,888	:	OF
Filed: March 31, 2004	:	PATENT TERM ADJUSTMENT
Attorney Docket No. 24207-10109	:	

This is a decision on the "REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF PATENT TERM ADJUSTMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.705(d)" filed April 28, 2009, requesting that the patent term adjustment determination for the above-identified patent be changed from five hundred five days (505) days to eight hundred fifty-seven (857) days.

The request for reconsideration of patent term adjustment is **DISMISSED**.

On March 3, 2009, the above-identified application matured into U.S. Patent No. 7,499,958 with a revised patent term adjustment of 505 days. This request for reconsideration of patent term adjustment was timely filed within two months of the issue date of the patent. See 37 CFR 1.705(d).

Patentees request recalculation of the patent term adjustment based on the decision in Wyeth v. Dudas, 580 F. Supp. 2d 138, 88 U.S.P.Q. 2d 1538 (D.D.C. 2008). Patentees assert:

In view of Wyeth v. Dudas, 580 F. Supp. 2d 138 (D. D.C. 2008) and the plain reading of the Patent Term Adjustment statute (35 U.S.C. § 154), Applicant submits that the Applicant is entitled to the sum of the delays under Rules 703(a) and 703(b) minus the days of Applicant delay, currently calculated to be 857 days ((505 + 352) -

0 = 857 days). According to the Court's interpretation, the statute does not permit the PTO to excuse one source of delay simply because it caused another source of delay by interpreting delays under Rule 703(a) and Rule 703(b) to be overlapping when such delays do not occur on the same calendar days. The delays under Rules 703(a) and 703(b) in this case are non-overlapping because the PTO delay from June 1, 2005 to October 18, 2006 (delay under Rule 703(a)) does not overlap with the PTO delay from April 1, 2007 to March 17, 2008 (delay under Rule 703(b)). Therefore, Applicant requests a PTA calculation based on the delays under Rules 703(a) and 703(b) minus the days of Applicant delay, yielding a calculation of $(505 + 352) - 0 = 857$ days.

Request dated 04/28/09, pp. 2-3.

The period of adjustment under 37 CFR 1.702(b) ("Three Year Delay") is the number of days, if any, in the period beginning on the day after the date that is three years after the date on which the application was filed under 35 U.S.C. 111(a) or the national stage commenced under 35 U.S.C. 371(b) or (f) in an international application and ending on the date a patent was issued.^[1]

¹ but not including the sum of the following periods:

(1) The number of days, if any, in the period beginning on the date on which a request for continued examination of the application under 35 U.S.C. 132(b) was filed and ending on the date the patent was issued;

(2)(i) The number of days, if any, in the period beginning on the date an interference was declared or redeclared to involve the application in the interference and ending on the date that the interference was terminated with respect to the application; and

(ii) The number of days, if any, in the period beginning on the date prosecution in the application was suspended by the Office due to interference proceedings under 35 U.S.C. 135(a) not involving the application and ending on the date of the termination of the suspension;

(3)(i) The number of days, if any, the application was maintained in a sealed condition under 35 U.S.C. 181;

(ii) The number of days, if any, in the period beginning on the date of mailing of an examiner's answer under § 41.39 of this title in the application under secrecy order and ending on the date the secrecy order was removed;

(iii) The number of days, if any, in the period beginning on the date applicant was notified that an interference would be declared but for the secrecy order and ending on the date the secrecy order was

In this instance, the Three Year Delay period of 352 days is calculated based on the application having been filed under 35 U.S.C. 111(a) on March 31, 2004, and a request for continued examination ("RCE") having been filed in this application on March 17, 2008. The filing of a RCE cuts-off the applicant's ability to accumulate any additional patent term adjustment against the three-year pendency provision, but does not otherwise affect patent term adjustment. 37 CFR 1.703(b)(1).

Patentees assert that in addition to this 352-day period, they are entitled to a period of adjustment due to examination delay, pursuant to 37 CFR 1.702(a)(1), of 505 days for the failure by the Office to mail at least one of a notification under 35 U.S.C. 132 not later than fourteen months after the date on which the application was filed under 35 U.S.C. 111(a). A nonfinal Office action was mailed on October 18, 2006, 14 months and 505 days after the application was filed on March 31, 2004.

Under 37 CFR 1.703(f), patentees are entitled to a period of patent term adjustment equal to the period of delays based on the grounds set forth in 37 CFR 1.702 reduced by the period of time equal to the period of time during which patentees failed to engage in reasonable efforts to conclude prosecution pursuant to 37 CFR 1.704. In other words, the period of Office delay reduced by the period of applicant delay. The period of reduction of zero days for applicant delay is not in dispute.

Patentees do not dispute that the total period of Office delay is the sum of the period of Three Year Delay (352 days) and the period of Examination Delay (505 days) to the extent that these periods of delay are not overlapping. However, patentees

removed; and

(iv) The number of days, if any, in the period beginning on the date of notification under § 5.3(c) of this chapter and ending on the date of mailing of the notice of allowance under 35 U.S.C. 151; and,

(4) The number of days, if any, in the period beginning on the date on which a notice of appeal to the Board of Patent Appeals and Interferences was filed under 35 U.S.C. 134 and § 41.31 of this title and ending on the date of the last decision by the Board of Patent Appeals and Interferences or by a Federal court in an appeal under 35 U.S.C. 141 or a civil action under 35 U.S.C. 145, or on the date of mailing of either an action under 35 U.S.C. 132, or a notice of allowance under 35 U.S.C. 151, whichever occurs first, if the appeal did not result in a decision by the Board of Patent Appeals and Interferences.

contend that no portion of the Three Year Delay period overlaps with the period of 14 month examination delay. Accordingly, patentees submit that the total period of adjustment for Office delay is 857 days, which is the sum of the period of Three Year Delay (352 days) and the period of Examination Delay (505 days), reduced by the period of overlap (0 days). As such, patentees assert entitlement to a patent term adjustment of 857 days (352 + 505 reduced by 0 overlap - 0 (applicant delay)).

Patentees' arguments have been considered, but are not persuasive. The Office concurs that as of the filing of the RCE on March 17, 2008, the application was pending three years and 352 days after its filing date. Further, the Office agrees that the action detailed above was not taken within the specified time frame, and thus, the entry of a period of adjustment of 505 days is proper. At issue is whether patentees should accrue 352 days of patent term adjustment for the Office taking in excess of three years to issue the patent, as well as, 505 days for Office failure to take a certain action within a specified time frame (or examination delay).

The Office contends that all 352 days overlap. Patentees' calculation of the period of overlap is inconsistent with the Office's interpretation of this provision. 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(2)(A) limits the adjustment of patent term, as follows:

to the extent that the periods of delay attributable to grounds specified in paragraph (1) overlap, the period of any adjustment granted under this subsection shall not exceed the actual number of days the issuance of the patent was delayed.

Likewise, 37 CFR 1.703(f) provides that:

To the extent that periods of delay attributable to the grounds specified in § 1.702 overlap, the period of adjustment granted under this section shall not exceed the actual number of days the issuance of the patent was delayed.

As explained in *Explanation of 37 CFR 1.703(f) and of the United States Patent and Trademark Office Interpretation of 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(2)(A)*, 69 Fed. Reg. 34283 (June 21, 2004), the Office interprets 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(2)(A) as permitting either patent

term adjustment under 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(A)(i)-(iv), or patent term adjustment under 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(B), but not as permitting patent term adjustment under both 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(A)(i)-(iv) and 154(b)(1)(B). Accordingly, the Office implements the overlap provision as follows:

If an application is entitled to an adjustment under 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(B), the entire period during which the application was pending (except for periods excluded under 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(B)(i)-(iii)), and not just the period beginning three years after the actual filing date of the application, is the period of delay under 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(B) in determining whether periods of delay overlap under 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(2)(A). Thus, any days of delay for Office issuance of the patent more than 3 years after the filing date of the application, which overlap with the days of patent term adjustment accorded prior to the issuance of the patent will not result in any additional patent term adjustment. See 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(B), 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(2)(A), and 37 CFR § 1.703(f). See *Changes to Implement Patent Term Adjustment Under Twenty Year Term; Final Rule*, 65 Fed. Reg. 56366 (Sept. 18, 2000). See also *Revision of Patent Term Extension and Patent Term Adjustment Provisions; Final Rule*, 69 Fed. Reg. 21704 (April 22, 2004), 1282 Off. Gaz. Pat. Office 100 (May 18, 2004). See also *Explanation of 37 CFR 1.703(f) and of the United States Patent and Trademark Office Interpretation of 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(2)(A)*, 69 Fed. Reg. 34283 (June 21, 2004).

The current wording of 37 CFR 1.703(f) was revised in response to the misinterpretation of this provision by a number of Patentees. The rule was slightly revised to more closely track the corresponding language of 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(2)(A). The relevant portion differs only to the extent that the statute refers back to provisions of the statute whereas the rule refers back to sections of the rule. This was not a substantive change to the rule nor did it reflect a change of the Office's interpretation of 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(2)(A). As stated in the *Explanation of 37 CFR 1.703(f) and of the United States Patent and Trademark Office Interpretation of 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(2)(A)*, the Office has consistently taken the position that if an application is entitled to an adjustment under the three-year pendency provision of 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(B), the entire period

during which the application was pending before the Office (except for periods excluded under 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(B)(i)-(iii)), and not just the period beginning three years after the actual filing date of the application, is the relevant period under 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(B) in determining whether periods of delay "overlap" under 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(2)(A).

This interpretation is consistent with the statute. Taken together the statute and rule provide that to the extent that periods of delay attributable to grounds specified in 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1) and in corresponding § 1.702 overlap, the period of adjustment granted shall not exceed the actual number of days the issuance of the patent was delayed. The grounds specified in these sections cover the A) guarantee of prompt Patent and Trademark Office responses, B) guarantee of no more than 3 year application pendency, and C) guarantee or adjustments for delays due to interference, secrecy orders and appeals. A section by section analysis of 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(2)(A) specifically provides that:

Section 4402 imposes limitations on restoration of term. In general, pursuant to [35 U.S.C.] 154(b)(2)(A)-(C), total adjustments granted for restorations under [35 U.S.C. 154](b)(1) are reduced as follows: (1) To the extent that there are multiple grounds for extending the term of a patent that may exist simultaneously (e.g., delay due to a secrecy order under [35 U.S.C.] 181 and administrative delay under [35 U.S.C.] 154(b)(1)(A)), the term should not be extended for each ground of delay but only for the actual number of days that the issuance of a patent was delayed; See 145 Cong. Rec. S14,718²

As such, the period for over three year pendency does not overlap only to the extent that the actual dates in the period beginning three years after the date on which the application was filed overlap with the actual dates in the periods for

² The AIPA is title IV of the Intellectual Property and Communications Omnibus Reform Act of 1999 (S. 1948), which was incorporated and enacted as law as part of Pub. L. 106-113. The Conference Report for H.R. 3194, 106th Cong. 1st Sess. (1999), which resulted in Pub. L. 106-113, does not contain any discussion (other than the incorporated language) of S. 1948. A section-by-section analysis of S. 1948, however, was printed in the Congressional Record at the request of Senator Lott, See 145 Cong. Rec. S14,708-26 (1999) (daily ed. Nov. 17, 1999).

failure of the Office to take action within specified time frames. In other words, consideration of the overlap does not begin three years after the filing date of the application.

In this instance, the relevant period under 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(B) in determining whether periods of delay "overlap" under 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(2)(A) is the entire period during which the application was pending before the Office, from the date of the filing of the application on March 31, 2004, to the date of the filing of the RCE on March 17, 2008 (except for periods excluded under 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(b)(i)-(iii)). The period of delay of 352 days for the Office taking in excess of three years to issue the patent overlaps with the 505 days accorded pursuant to 37 CFR 1.702(a)(1) during the pendency of the application prior to the filing of the RCE. The period of 505 days is considered the actual number of days that the issuance of the patent was delayed, considering the 352 days over three years to the filing of the RCE. As the 505 days had already been accorded, at issuance, the Office properly entered no additional days of patent term adjustment for the Office taking in excess of three years to issue the patent.

In view thereof, no adjustment to the patent term will be made. The revised determination of patent term adjustment at the time of the issuance of the patent will remain 505 days.

The Office acknowledges the submission of the \$200.00 fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.18(e). No additional fees are required.

Telephone inquiries specific to this matter should be directed to the undersigned at (571) 272-3211.

Christina Tartera Donnell

Christina Tartera Donnell
Senior Petitions Attorney
Office of Petitions